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The Hague Conference.

It is impossible as yet to give any more definite information either as to the exact date of the assembling of the Hague Conference or as to the final nature of the program. Mr. Frederick de Martens, who, as is well known, is visiting as the Czar's envoy the capitals of Europe to discuss with the governments the question of the date and the details of the program, has announced that the middle of June seems, from all that he has learned, to be the most agreeable date for the opening. But no official announcement has yet been made to this effect.

We do not think there is any ground for the suggestion, still occasionally heard, that the Conference will not meet at all this year. The governments have practically all expressed themselves in favor of the meeting. At the opening of the new Reichstag last month, the German Emperor, who, because of his attitude in the Conference of 1899, has been supposed to be cold hearted about the coming one, expressed his warm approval of the holding of the Conference. The following statement given out by Mr. de Martens, on his arrival in London, as to the progress of his mission and the prospects of the Con-

ference, gives an excellent idea of the whole subject, from both the encouraging side and the more pessimistic outlook:

"I have so far consulted three powers,—Germany, the United States and France,—and I am very satisfied with the display of goodwill which I have found everywhere, and the readiness to help the Conference. The second Peace Conference, which is to assemble at The Hague in June, will be unique in the history of international relations. While at the first Conference only twenty-six powers were represented, the delegates of forty-six powers will meet under the same roof to discuss questions of mutual interest. Of course, there can be no doubt of the fact that the question of disarmament and the limitation of armaments will be the *pièce de résistance* of the program, and if either the British or the United States government has really decided to place this question on the agenda of the Conference the powers will be obliged to discuss it. I cannot imagine that any one power would make this question the cause of serious political complications. Personally my feeling is that the matter is not yet ripe for discussion, and I am quite convinced that at the present moment it will be quite impossible to attain any practical result from its discussion. I cannot see how the powers could disarm or how they could limit their armaments.

"At the same time I think it absolutely necessary, in order to guarantee the success of the labors of the Conference, that before it meets this question or any other matter which is to be brought forward should be known by all the powers represented, so that the necessary instructions may be given to the various delegates. There must be no surprises at the Conference, and the representative of every power must know exactly what is to be discussed and what are the results desired by the government he represents. Every resolution passed by the Conference will have obligatory force if unanimity prevails, but not a single power can be forced by a majority of votes. This is a further reason why there should not be complicated discussions and why the Conference should be carried on in a spirit of harmony and mutual goodwill.

"With regard to the results of my mission so far, I may say that Germany, France and Russia all hold that the question of disarmament is not yet ripe for discussion, and further that, even the limitation of armaments not being a practical question, no good can come from the discussion of it.

"The United States has reserved the right of placing the question of disarmament before the Conference, but I have not heard as yet whether the Washington government has actually decided to do this or not.

"I repeat what I have said on previous occasions, that the one desire of the Czar—his most sincere wish—is